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Christ and Him Crucified,

THE GREAT THEME OF EVANGELICAL PREACHING; THE WORLD'S HOPE AND THE BASIS OF CHURCH PROSPERITY.

A SERMON,

Preached before the Convention of Congregational Ministers,

IN THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN ALBANY,

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Sermon.

Beloved brethren in the ministry and friends of our common Savior:—When called, very unexpectedly, a few days since, to address you on the present occasion, I greatly desired that I might be enabled so to perform the service assigned me as to make it promotive of the object for which we are met,—the prosperity of our churches and the glory of Christ in our land. In casting about for a subject, I quickly decided not to take one of a denominational or sectarian character; for I felt that in doing so I should offend both against the spirit of Congregationalism and the wishes of those who compose this Convention. It seemed, too, improper, that in my place and at this stage of our meeting, I should assume to make out a programme of business, or discourse on topics that might be expected to come up for general discussion. I felt myself little qualified to attempt such a service, and I willingly deferred it to those present who are better able than myself to do it justice. Having thus narrowed down my range of subjects, I rejoiced to find myself within the circle of our common Christianity, and was readily drawn to what we all regard the central point of that Christianity,—Christ and him crucified; the great theme of evangelical preaching, the world's hope and the basis of church prosperity.

Taking this as my stand-point, I have the pleasing hope that I shall carry along with me the sympathies and the prayers of my hearers, while I direct their attention to the words of Paul recorded in

1 *Corinthians* 2 : 2.—For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

It was the great animating principle and governing purpose of the Apostle's ministry, to make manifest the glory of his Savior, and to proclaim his atoning blood as the only ground of hope to lost man. In this, as in everything else relating to the duties of the sacred office, his example is worthy of all imitation. Let us then bend our attention to the Scripture before us, and consider :—

I. What is the import of the Apostle's determination. And

II. What were the reasons which influenced him in forming it.

I. Now to know, or, which is the true meaning of the phrase—to make known Christ and him crucified is to proclaim him in the glory of his person and excellence of his work, especially that part of his work that consists in his giving himself to die as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world. To do this, the Apostle tells us, was the deliberate and settled purpose of his ministry. We are not, however, to infer from his language in our text that he meant to confine his preaching to the single topic of Christ crucified. This would be putting a construction upon his words that would prove him false to his own determination, and make him a very unskillful dispenser of divine truth. He doubtless preached at Corinth the same system of religion that he did at Rome, and taught the same doctrines in his sermons that he did in his epistles. We know from the history of his ministry that his preaching did take a very wide range, embracing the being, perfections, law and government of God, the character, state and destiny of man, together with the various duties that grow out of our numerous relations and circumstances in life.

To ascertain the true meaning of the Apostle's determination, we must advert to the circumstances in which he was placed

when he formed it. He was then at Corinth, a city famous for its school of philosophy and rhetoric, and for the ingenuity and learning of its inhabitants. There he was surrounded, on the one hand, by philosophers and self-reputed wise men, who insisted upon the sufficiency of natural religion, or what they styled wisdom, and demanded that everything presented to them in the form of instruction should be dressed out in the most elegant style, and delivered according to the rules of the most finished rhetoric. They were proud of their philosophy, and boasted of their wisdom, and deemed *them* a sufficient foundation on which to build their faith and their hopes.

On the other hand, he was beset with Jews and judaizing teachers, who insisted upon the perpetual obligation of the law of Moses, and taught that none could be saved but by an observance of its rites and ceremonies. These were bigoted in their attachment to the religion of their fathers, and could not endure to have taken from them the hopes they built upon it, of justification before God. In these circumstances, the Apostle, instead of falling in with the sentiments of either party, set aside the claims of both. He resolved not to preach philosophy to please the Greeks, nor the law of Moses to gratify the Jews. He regarded both as utterly insufficient to secure the salvation of the soul, and he therefore determined to preach neither, but to present Christ crucified as the only foundation of hope to guilty man. And he determined to preach him, not with excellency of speech and of wisdom, not in the studied artificial style of Grecian eloquence, but with all simplicity and plainness, that the faith of his converts, as he says, should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. The main thing then which the Apostle had in view in his determination was to *exclude* every other ground of hope, but Christ crucified, and to present him in his personal glory and atoning sacrifice, as the only name under heaven, whereby men can be saved. He did not mean to say that he would preach on no other subject, but that he would exhibit no other ground of hope. Christ crucified, he felt assured, is "God's

grand ordinance" for saving a ruined world; and he knew, for he had been taught it by inspiration, that nothing could be done in delivering men from the power and the punishment of sin, but by holding him forth in the true dignity of his person and perfection of his work; the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. This, therefore, he determined to make the great leading object of his ministry.

In addition to this, it is, no doubt, implied in his determination, that he meant to make the doctrine of Christ crucified a subject of frequent and distinct discussion, to dwell upon it much and earnestly in preaching the Gospel. He regarded this doctrine as holding such a prominent place in the system of revealed truth, and so fundamental in the plan of salvation, that he resolved never to lose sight of it, but to make it the basis of his ministry and the life of his services. He determined that on whatever subject he preached, or whatever duties he enjoined, the doctrine of Christ crucified should support all, illustrate all, enforce all, and pervade all by its heavenly light and quickening power. He would have all his instructions tend towards Christ, all his exhortations point to Christ, all the lines of his ministry and labors of his life meet and center in Christ, and thus manifest his glory and extend the triumphs of his cross in the salvation of dying men.

Such is the import of the Apostle's determination. Let us consider:

II. The reasons that influenced him in forming it. It strikes us as remarkable, at first view, that the Apostle should adopt a purpose like that in our text, which was opposed to the whole current doctrine and sentiment of his day, which exposed him to the bitterest scorn and reproach of the world, and made his whole life a scene of the greatest self-denial and suffering, and finally brought him to a martyr's death. He must have had strong reasons for adopting the course he did. What were they? I answer:—

1. Paul regarded the doctrine of Christ crucified as constituting the grand, distinguishing peculiarity of the Gospel. The Gospel, as distinguished from the law, and also from natural religion, is a *remedial* system. It is a scheme of mercy, not discoverable by the light of nature, but made known in the revelation of God, for the recovery of lost men to his image and favor. But what is more; it is a scheme built entirely on the mediation of Christ. The pardon and eternal life revealed in the Gospel are not an absolute, unconditional gift of God; but the purchase of a Savior's atoning blood; the fruit of his suffering unto death. We are redeemed from the curse of the law, not by the blotting ou of its sanctions, but by Christ bearing the curse for us; making expiation for our sins by the sacrifice of himself. Hence, the Bible abounds in such language as the following:—Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Whom, that is, Christ, God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. He was once offered to bear the sins of many. He became sin, that is, a sin offering for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son; are washed from our sins in his blood; are saved by his death; and have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, through his blood.

These, and numerous other passages that might be cited, set the fact before us with great distinctness, that salvation comes to us only through Christ, giving himself a ransom for us; dying that we might live through his atoning sacrifice. And this, we say, is the distinguishing truth of the Gospel. *Forgiveness of sin through the atonement of Christ*—this makes the Gospel what it is, glad tidings to perishing sinners, and distinguishes it from every other system of religion.

Natural religion teaches us the being and perfections of God; our accountability to him as the subjects of his government, the immortality of the soul, many of our social and relative duties, and a future state of rewards and punishments. But it reveals no way in which sinners, like ourselves, can be pardoned. It

shows us our guilt; but tells us not how it may be washed away. It warns us of danger as exposed to the displeasure of a righteous God; but points us to no refuge and opens before us no way of reconciliation to our offended Sovereign. Hence the poor heathen are, and ever have been in profound darkness on this subject. And so are infidels, and all who reject the hope of Israel, and the Savior thereof. Despair hangs heavy on the spirit at the approach of death, and no voice of mercy speaks of pardon and peace, as the soul passes, in the dimness of nature's light, to its dwelling place beyond the grave. Here the Gospel comes in with its overtures of pardon and means of reconciliation through a crucified Savior. It shows us God in Christ reconciling the world to himself; and pointing us to the Lamb of God, the appointed sacrificial victim that taketh away the sin of the world, it bids us look unto him and live, and assures us that believing in him we shall be justified freely by his grace, have peace with God and rejoice in hope of his glory.

The doctrine of Christ crucified, then, lies at the foundation of the Gospel. It is the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian system, and forms the broad line of separation between it and all that is called religion. This, then, was one reason why Paul determined to make the doctrine of Christ crucified the great prominent theme of his preaching. It constitutes the essential glory of the Gospel.

2. Another reason that influenced the Apostle in his determination is the fact that the doctrine in question affords the clearest and most affecting views of the character of God, especially of his justice and mercy, his goodness and truth. I look up to the heavens, and abroad over creation, and I everywhere behold evidences of an all-wise, powerful, reigning God; but in the light of natural religion, I cannot know what he is to me, nor what I have to expect from him. I shrink from his holiness. I tremble before his awful majesty, and I see not how I, a poor, needy sinner, can approach his throne with confidence, or look up to him with

hope as my Father. An impenetrable vail hides his highest moral glory from my view; and it is only as I turn to contemplate him as seen in his Son, my Savior, that I behold the infinite attractions of his love and am drawn to him in filial affection and trust. Hence it is said,—*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* If we would study the character and ways of God to the greatest advantage, we must place ourselves at the foot of the cross, and view them as illustrated in the work of redemption. Here angels love to study this character, as in their bright abodes they desire to look into these things; and principalities and powers, during eternal ages, will be learning the manifold wisdom of God as displayed in the redemption of his Church, through the mediation of his Son our Savior. Here the infinite wisdom, the spotless holiness, the immutable justice, the eternal love, the abounding mercy of our God, all shine forth in beautiful harmony and glory. No one darkens or eclipses the other; every one gives a luster to the rest. The Eternal stands before us the righteous Lawgiver, the wise moral Governor, the merciful Father, the true and faithful, yet kind and gracious God; the *just God and Savior.* Nowhere does the justice of God appear so inflexible, his mercy so attractive, his wisdom so profound, or his truth so immutable as in the gift of his Son to die for the redemption of a lost world, and in the Son's giving himself to endure the mysterious agonies of the cross, that sinners might live through him.

> "Here the whole Deity is known:
> Nor dares a creature guess,
> Which of the glories brightest shone,
> The justice or the grace."

Here God appears at once the sinner's friend, and sin's eternal foe,—delighting to forgive and show mercy; but in no wise clearing the guilty by giving up the claims of his justice, or waiving his rights as Lawgiver and Ruler of the world.

3. As another reason that influenced the Apostle in his deter-

mination, I mention the perfect adaptation of the doctrine of Christ crucified to the character and state of man as a fallen, perishing sinner. In this character man is oppressed with innumerable wants which no created power can remove. He is guilty and needs pardon; he is sinful and needs renewal of heart; he is spiritually poor and needs to be enriched from the treasures of grace; he is weak, frail, dying, and needs the upholding care and guidance of an Almighty friend; he is going to the judgment and eternity, and he needs what will save him from the wrath to come, secure for him a friend in his Judge, and make him an heir of immortal happiness in the state beyond the grave. These wants press upon all the children of men; and they fill the world with sighs and groans and tears. And how are they to be met and removed? Who can tell me how I can have my sins forgiven, my fallen, shattered nature renewed, my spirit cheered with the love of God, and my path to death and the grave brightened with the hope full of immortality? The world has no answer to these questions. Philosophy is silent, or speaks only to torture my anxious bosom with increased perplexity and doubt. Human wisdom, in all its pride and boasting, has not a word to say, when her oracles are consulted on the high concerns of pardon, of reconciliation to God, of judgment, and the scenes following the judgment. Here again the doctrine of Christ crucified comes in, dissipates my doubts, removes my fears, speaks peace to my mind and spreads a cheering light over all the scenes of the future. It *assures* me of the infinite love and compassion of God, in that he gave his Son to die for me, and draws me to his throne with humble boldness to ask for the supply of all my wants, in the Mediator's name. It shows me God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing the trespasses of them that believe in him. And while there comes forth from the cross of Christ an assurance of God's willingness to pardon and save, even the chief of sinners, there emanates from the same source an influence to enlighten, to sanctify, to animate with hope, to cheer with victories over the world, and to encourage with pledges of eternal blessedness

beyond the scenes of earth and time. In this view the doctrine of Christ crucified is eminently a doctrine of consolation, of joy and peace and hope. It comes home to the bosom, not as a dry speculation, a cold dogma of philosophy, but warm with the sympathies of everlasting love; and placing you on the broad ground of an atonement made for the sins of the world, bids you look up to God as a forgiving Father, and receive pardon, grace and eternal life as a free gift. It assures you that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin; and that found in him, he becomes to you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. No condemnation can reach you either in this or the future world; but passed from death unto life, you have peace with God and rejoice in hope of his glory. In the faith of this doctrine the poor, the guilty, the sorrowful and the lost have in every age found strong consolation, and in the light and comfort of it have passed the time of their sojourning on earth in peace, and met death in the triumphs of joy and hope. How was it that Paul, a blasphemer and a persecutor, obtained pardon and hope; how was it that amid persecutions and trials of every kind, he was enabled to maintain such habitual peace of mind and to sing so sweet a song in the house of his pilgrimage? He tells us in one short sentence; Christ loved me and gave himself to die for me, therefore God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ; and I account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of his precious name; and will know nothing but Him and him crucified in preaching the gospel of his grace to guilty, perishing men.

4. As another reason for this determination, I mention the *tendency* of the doctrine of Christ crucified; its power above all other means to bring men to repentance and a holy life. Account for it as we may, the fact is undeniable, that the doctrine in question has, in all ages of the world, turned into feebleness all other means of awakening and saving men from the dominion and the curse of sin. It has been clothed with a power, alto-

gether its own, to arouse the conscience, subdue the heart, and bring the life into a conformity to the will of Christ. Though the preaching of this doctrine in primitive times by Paul and his fellow-apostles was accounted foolishness, and despised as among the weak things of the world, it nevertheless proved itself, by actual results, to be the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. The efficacy of this doctrine Paul had felt in his own soul; it made him a new man; by it the world was crucified to him, and he to the world; and witnessing, as he did, every where its triumphs in the conviction and conversion of men, he wisely and firmly determined, in the face of all the ignominy and reproach that were cast upon him, to make this doctrine the burden of his preaching. A mighty energy attended the simple preaching of the cross. Wherever he went proclaiming this doctrine, the Spirit of almighty grace was present with him; the altars and temples of idolatry crumbled into dust; the darkness of ages rolled away, and thousands, awakened as by the voice of God from the slumbers of sin, rose to newness of life, and pressed to the gate of glory. And so it has been in all ages since the days of the Apostles. Christ crucified is God's grand ordinance for reconciling sinners to himself. And when this doctrine has been proclaimed in its native simplicity—unencumbered with philosophy, unmixed with metaphysics, there God has borne testimony to the word of his grace, by the effusions of his Spirit, and souls have been converted to Christ. The affecting experience of the Moravian missionaries in Greenland is well known. For many years did they labor to teach the benighted pagans the existence and attributes of God, and, generally, the doctrines of natural religion. Never was work more unsuccessful. The heart of the Greenlander, cold as his own snows, was unmoved, and the missionaries appeared to labor in vain. At length, it happened that one of them read in the hearing of a savage the account of the Savior's sufferings in the garden and on the cross. How is this, said the poor pagan; tell me it once more, for I would be saved; and laid his hand on his mouth and wept. This was the com-

mencement of a marvelous work of grace among the benighted Greenlanders; which continued for a long time and resulted in the conversion of many hundreds; and here was illustrated anew the principle of the Gospel adapted to all ages and people, that the story of a suffering, atoning Savior is the grand means of teaching sinners every where their guilt, and of drawing tears of repentance from eyes which but for that would never weep. Similar to this was the experience of Brainerd while laboring as a missionary among the Indians of our country. The most powerful impressions he ever witnessed on their dark minds, he tells us, were under a discourse he addressed to them on the love of Christ in giving himself to die for sinners. While dwelling on this theme, with his own heart filled with the spirit of it, the assembly seemed pervaded by a mighty subduing influence, and great numbers of them bowed in penitence and faith under the doctrine of Christ crucified, and testified their love to his precious name by lives consecrated to his service. Did time permit, I might cite numerous other examples of the same kind. The Gospel, in its grand distinguishing element of Christ crucified, has gone in among the people of the Sandwich Islands, and, within our own times, has changed the whole plan and mould of society; banishing idolatry, infanticide, licentiousness and crime, and gathering thousands into the church of Christ, washed and purified by his grace. It has gone in among the poor degraded inhabitants of Southern Africa, among the ferocious tribes of our own country, among the refined voluptuous Asiatics, and the wild savages in the islands of the Pacific, and by its mighty transforming influence has led forth multitudes of disciples for the Lord Jesus, purifying their hearts by faith in him as a crucified Savior. But where, I may ask, in all the world have such changes in human character been wrought, except where this doctrine has been taught and a prominent place given it in the teachings of the ministry?

I must just add, that as the doctrine of Christ crucified has always been found the most efficacious in the awakening and con-

version of *sinners*, so also it has in quickening and comforting Christians and making them fruitful unto God. No other doctrine speaks with such a voice of power to the inner man; no other doctrine can so melt and subdue the heart, can so fill it with joy and peace in believing; with love to God and love to men; or so transform the soul into the image of Christ and fit it for his presence in heaven. Yes, and when the redeemed shall be gathered home to heaven and stand each one on Mount Zion with palms of victory in their hands and crowns of glory on their heads, Christ who died to redeem them will be the supreme object of attraction, and the grateful song will burst forth from every heart,—Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father—to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

In applying, passing to an application of our subject to practical purposes, I remark:

1. *It fixes the standard of true evangelical preaching.* If the Apostle was right in determining to make Christ and him crucified the great theme of his preaching, then the preaching of others is evangelical only so far as it imitates this inspired example. Preaching may be learned, may be eloquent, may be very interesting and stirring as an exhibition of talent and genius, and yet have no claim whatever to the character of evangelical preaching. It may discourse elegantly and forcibly on moral topics; it may discuss the nature and destiny of man as rational and immortal; the law and government of God; the guilt and punishment of sin, and the retributions of a future judgment, all subjects of importance, and not to be excluded from their proper place in the instructions of the pulpit; and yet there may be in all this so little reference to Christ and him crucified, so little of the peculiar spirit of the Gospel as a system of mediation and mercy for lost men, that it can with no propriety be regarded as preaching Christ, or as evangelical

in its character. And here, there can be no doubt, lies a chief defect in the preaching of the present day. It does not give sufficient prominency to Christ, to his person, to his character, to his work in giving himself to die for the sins of the world. It is often versatile, ingenious, speculative, polished; but it dwells not enough on topics immediately connected with the atoning sacrifice and mediation of Christ. And the subjects which it does discuss are not viewed sufficiently in their relation to Christ, nor are they so presented as to turn the eyes and the hearts of men to *Him* who is the source and center of all spiritual life and hope and salvation. In a word, there is a great deal of preaching which is anything else but preaching Christ and him crucified. But preaching which is essentially defective in this particular, whatever other qualities it may possess, cannot deserve the name of evangelical preaching. Nor can it in any manner accomplish the great end of preaching. It cannot convince of sin, nor bring the soul to Christ, nor build it up in joy, and faith, and hope. It is dry, weak, powerless as to all spiritual results. It may amuse the curious, the gay, and the worldly; but it has no consolation for the sorrowful, no peace for the conscience, and no hope full of immortality for the miserable and the lost. It is not owned of God, as his wisdom and power unto salvation; and it is not owned of him to this end, because it does not bear testimony to the Son of his love, nor speak of his atoning blood as the only ground of hope for guilty man. And the preaching, I repeat, which is obviously defective in this particular, which does not make Christ the soul and the center of its ministrations, always has been, and always must be inefficient and fruitless,—failing entirely in all the great ends of the ministry—bringing sinners to repentance, and maturing Christians for the purity and bliss of heaven. The testimony of Dr. Chalmers on this point has often been referred to. Twelve years he preached the reformations of morality, and honesty, and integrity among his people, leaving out Christ and him crucified as the basis of his ministrations; and he tells us, as the result,

that he labored in vain, and spent his strength for naught; none of those to whom he ministered being made more moral or more honest by his preaching. The same has always been the result, wherever the experiment has been made. On the other hand, the preaching that dwells much and affectionately on Christ, that makes him first and fundamental in its ministrations, enforcing its instructions by motives drawn from the love of Christ, and making all the lines of its influence meet and center in him,—such preaching is never left without decisive tokens of God's approbation. He attends it with the power of his Spirit; sinners are awakened and converted, and Christians are edified in faith and love.

I have before referred to the experience of David Brainerd, and the Moravian missionaries. And I will now add that of the celebrated Gossner, a converted Catholic priest, who is, or was a few years since, a Protestant clergyman in Berlin. It is said that he has probably been the means of the immediate conversion of more souls than any man living. Yet, he seldom varies in his manner of preaching. The love of Christ is almost his constant theme; and his preaching is almost a constant pouring out of the warm effusions of the heart on the love of God, the preciousness of the Savior, the glory of his salvation, and the blessedness of heaven, where Christ reigns. Preaching of this kind may, in the estimation of a worldly mind, seem devoid of the elements of power. But facts demonstrate the contrary. It brings to needy, guilty man a message adapted to his deepest wants; a message of love, of pardon and life from his God; it tells him of the kindness and compassion of one who has died for his redemption, and risen again for his justification; it tells him of help provided for him in the agency of the Holy Spirit; it speaks to him in a voice of tenderness and love, warning him indeed of danger, but pointing to a way of escape; and while it proffers all needed aid to the poorest and most guilty of our race, it allures to heaven, and directs the steps in the path thither, by unfolding the joys of salvation, and holding out the crown of

eternal glory. This is Gospel; this is glad tidings; and rely upon it, brethren, the nearer we keep the Gospel in these views of it to our hearts, and the more we dwell upon it as a doctrine of Christ crucified, a suffering, sympathizing, reigning Savior, the nearer will Christ be to our souls, the more of his presence shall we enjoy in our ministry, and the more pure and abundant will be the fruit gathered to the glory of his name and the advancement of his cause.

Taking our place at the foot of the cross, abiding there in communion with our crucified Master, and doing our work in the spirit which that position is suited to inspire and to cherish, our preaching will be in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. We shall dwell in light and love ourselves; and great will be our joy in leading on to heaven souls redeemed by the blood of Christ, sanctified by his grace, loving and honoring his precious name, preparing to be hereafter our joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of our and their Lord and Savior.

2. *Does not our subject suggest the means on which we are chiefly to rely in seeking to promote the prosperity and extension of our churches?* This is an object dear to our hearts, and we have come together in this Convention in the hope that we might do something for its advancement. But how is this to be done? Not surely by inflaming and diffusing a sectarian or denominational zeal. Congregationalism repudiates such zeal, and can have no fellowship with it, whether it breaks out, as it occasionally does, in its own body, or as manifested in other denominations. It is of a larger, freer, more expansive spirit, and naturally seeks communion and co-operation with all of every name that love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity and in truth. Congregationalists, properly speaking, never were a sect, and never can be, till they renounce the true spirit of their order. At the first they organized churches on what they believed to be scriptural principles; then, when inquired of by others, they freely gave a full and explicit statement of their faith and order,

leaving it to them to say, whether they would extend to them the right-hand of fellowship as churches of Christ. This is as it should be; and we can hope to prosper as a denomination only as we cherish the same spirit and act on the same principle—*fellowship with all who hold the Head, and co-operation with all who will co-operate with us in building up the cause of our common Savior.* In seeking to promote the true interests of the churches in our connection, we can have nothing to do with the spirit of sect which would separate us from other branches of the Church of Christ, and draw us off to work *within ourselves and for ourselves*, regardless of the general good. Such a spirit is bad in itself, and it makes a sorry appearance at the foot of the cross or by the side of the spirit of our text. Christ, it should be remembered, was not crucified for Congregationalists alone, nor for Presbyterians alone, nor for Methodists, nor for Baptists, nor for Episcopalians alone; but for all of every name who own him as their Lord and trust in his atoning blood for salvation; and the doctrine we have been considering, fully recognizing this fact, forbids us to attempt to promote the interests of our particular denomination by any measures that shall infringe on the rights, or obstruct the prosperity, of other portions of the great family of Christ. Nor if we plant ourselves on the doctrine of Christ crucified, and act in the true spirit and intent of it, can we *possibly* be disposed to adopt such measures, or pursue any such narrow sectarian policy? No, brethren; if we would see our churches prosper, built up in faith and holiness, and spread abroad through the land, blessed with revivals, and increased continually in the number and fruitfulness of their communicants, let our ministry be deeply imbued with the spirit of Christ crucified; let them abide near the cross; there invigorating their faith and love, there studying their theology, there enlarging their charity, there strengthening their zeal, their self-denial, and devotedness; and thus made ready, thoroughly furnished unto every good work, let them go forth to proclaim to the people the unsearchable riches of Christ, seeking to

breathe into the Churches the same spirit, and to animate them with the faith and love of the same truths that live and reign in their own bosoms; let our ministry and our churches go forth to their respective duties in the spirit and in the manner here indicated, and strength and salvation from the Lord are surely ours. Here, it seems to me, are the means, and the only means on which we can safely rely for promoting the prosperity and extension of our churches. Sectarianism we cannot away with; it has no affinity with our order, and we should give it no place in our counsels or our measures. We have no hierarchy to rely upon, and we want none. We have no wide extended organization, strongly interlocked and compacted together; a net-work of courts and governments, and appeals thrown over our churches and binding them in on every side. Such things, if they are an advantage, other denominations may boast of and rely upon; but we have them not. The frame-work around our churches is very simple, and our *external* machinery for propagandism is naught. Our polity is the worst possible for all sectarian uses. The only bond that binds us together is the unity of the spirit, kept in the pledge and culture of peace. We have no other reliance for strength or for growth. We fall back, then, of necessity, on the truth and Spirit of God. These are the weapons of our warfare—not carnal, but spiritual; and we have no other to make use of, either for aggression or defense. Hitherto, these have been sufficient for every emergency; a sure ground of prosperity and strength, and on these, primarily and chiefly, must we rely in time to come. And if, in the spirit of our crucified Master, and in the faith and power of the great truths taught us by his cross, we go forth to our work, *out-preaching*, *out-praying*, *out-living* our brethren of other denominations, in Christian zeal and beneficence, we shall surely outstrip them in the career of prosperity; our churches will be multiplied and spread over our land as strong, bright watch-towers of the Gospel, existing not to make war upon other portions of the sacramental host of God's elect, but rejoicing in their onward march

and rising prosperity, and ever ready, not to fight against them, but to unite with them in fighting against the common enemies of our Lord and man's salvation.

3. *Does not our subject suggest the spirit and aim by which we should be governed in the deliberations of this Convention?* We have come here from different and distant parts of our country, servants of a crucified Master, and ministers of his Gospel, to consider by what means we can best promote the honor of his name and the advancement of the common cause of his Gospel. The occasion is one of great interest, the only one of the kind that has occurred in our denomination for 172 years, and much, very much, depends on the spirit in which we conduct our deliberations, and the end we aim to accomplish by them. The eyes of other denominations throughout the country are turned upon us; and, what is more, the eyes of our blessed Lord and Savior are turned upon us, and he expects us to be actuated in all our counsels and measures by the spirit he manifested in giving himself to die for us and a lost world.

I mistake, if any in this convention have come here with a sectarian, divisive spirit, or have any wish or purpose to press measures that shall separate us more widely from those of our brethren with whom we have hitherto been accustomed to co-operate. If there are such, I am sure they must be few; and I am still more sure, that their counsels cannot prevail. We have come together for peace, for mutual fellowship and consultation respecting our common interests, and I have a strong persuasion that the result of our meeting will be, not only to bind us together more closely as a denomination, but to place us on the ground of a more ready and harmonious co-operation with our brethren of other denominations, especially with our Presbyterian brethren, who are our natural allies, and with whom we have so long sustained relations mutually and eminently useful and happy. They hold the same faith with us in a crucified Savior, and preach the same system of doctrines. And we can have no

wish to separate from them, so long as, in good faith, they are disposed to co-operate with us in promoting the common cause. We feel that nothing is to be gained, on either side, by such a separation, certainly nothing to the cause of our common Christianity; but much, very much to be lost. Our voice therefore is for peace; is for mutual good-will and fraternal co-operation; especially in all the great benevolent movements of the day; separating only where we must and can with perfectly kind feeling, in things non-essential, matters of church order and government. But standing on my watch-tower and looking at the signs of the times, I most seriously fear that the day is not distant when the separation here deprecated will be effected. I fear there are some among our Presbyterian brethren, and some perhaps among our own, who, most unwisely, as I think, are wishing to sever the two denominations, and put an end to all such co-operation as has hitherto existed between them. This, I must believe, is eminently unhappy and altogether of evil tendency. We of New England, we Congregationalists as a body, may I not say, wish for no such thing; we deprecate and shall act against it; certainly shall do nothing to hasten it. And we say here that if separation in those matters in which we have hitherto been united, must come, let it all come from one side; let us do nothing here or elsewhere, either to hasten or to consummate it; and then when it is done, we shall see, and our Presbyterian brethren will see, on which side is the gain and on which side is the loss. But why need this be? Why, in either denomination, should there be any jealousy, any strife, as to who shall be first, or any disposition to sever or to weaken the ties that bind us together? Difficulties to some extent may of course be expected to arise in our new and sparsely settled states in the organization of churches, in the settlement of pastors, and in the location and support of missionaries sent out by our Home Missionary Society. These, however, for the most part, can be easily overcome, or at least easily borne, if met in the spirit of Christian love and forbearance. But who can estimate the evils that would be sure to result

from a final and fixed separation of these denominations; a separation that would cut directly through many of the infant churches of the West, that would sunder our benevolent societies, send a sectarian influence far over the foreign missionary field, and create endless jealousies and strifes between brethren at home? No, let us bear and forbear, a long time, before we, on either side, be accessory in bringing upon our respective churches such evils as these. We have no jealousy in relation to our Presbyterian brethren; we acknowledge them as brethren in Christ, we love them as such; we bid them God-speed in all their efforts to multiply and extend their churches; we have long been accustomed to send them our men and our money to aid them in this work; we shall be most ready and happy to do so in time to come; nor shall we be "careful to go into any close sectarian calculation of the gains and losses to each denomination respectively in the operation of the great societies through which our charities flow." All we ask in return is a reciprocation of kind, Christian feeling, and a readiness, so far as there may be opportunity, to co-operate with us on *equal terms*, in the common cause of spreading the light and blessings of the Gospel through our land and world. This, we are sure, is right, is in the spirit of our Master, in the spirit of Christ crucified; and may all the deliberations and measures of this Convention be in the spirit and with the aim here indicated! Then all will be well; and we shall return to our homes strengthened and refreshed in spirit, and rejoice with our people in the happy results of our meeting.

4. Finally, how great is the honor and privilege of being ministers of the crucified Savior; his appointed heralds to publish salvation through his atoning blood to lost men. Here, brethren, let us kneel at the foot of the cross, and humbly and gratefully adore the grace that has called us to bear a part in this high and holy work; and bathing our souls in the spirit of Him who gave himself to die for us, trusting in his mercy and rejoicing in hope of his glory, we shall account no trials great, no labors severe,

which we may be called to endure in preaching Christ and him crucified to our dying fellow-men. Like Paul we shall account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of his precious name; and like him we shall be willing to suffer the loss of all things, if so we may honor our Redeemer in winning souls to his love, and training them up for the joys of his eternal kingdom. We are called to exercise our ministry in widely separated portions of the common vineyard; some as pastors in the older and established churches of the East, and some as pastors and missionaries in the new and scattered and comparatively feeble churches of the West. But the field is one, the work is one, the Master is one, one the heaven to which we go, and one the reward that awaits us there. Trials and privations and toils are incident to the sacred office every where. Paul knew them in all their incessant and exhausting severity; but he never saw the day, no, not when suffering hunger and cold and nakedness; not when he was whipped and stoned; not even when he was thrust into the inner dungeon in the gaol at Philippi, and was led forth on the Appian way to be put to death; no, he never saw the day when he would have exchanged the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus for the scepter and the crown of the mightiest monarch on earth. The secret of all was this: the love of Christ constrained him and his presence cheered him, and the hope of his glory made all his trials seem light and momentary. And so with us, my brethren. The love of Christ in us and his presence with us, and the hope of his eternal smiles in heaven cheering us,—these will sweeten all our cares, lighten all our toils, and make all the way before us bright and pleasant as illumined with rays from the Eternal Throne. Our brief day of labor in the service of our Master will soon be over, and in heaven, if through grace we attain that pure and happy world, it will be pleasant to look back and recount our toils, our triumphs and our victories in the cause of our glorious Redeemer, while we shall cast our crowns at his feet and sing forever with all the ransomed of the Lord,—Unto him that loved us and washed us

from our sins in his own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

I close in the words of one who a few months since addressed an assembly not unlike this, and on an occasion very similar to the present:*

"We individually shall not live and labor long. We shall be assembled as we are now but once in our lives—and soon from this convocation we shall go back to our individual fields of labor,—to work perchance a little longer, or to lie down and die. Associated together, or as individuals, may the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon us,—that in these united counsels we may be led to results that shall be well pleasing to our Master; that while life lasts we may maintain those great principles which we have received; and that we may send them onward, to future times, to bless and save those who shall live when we are dead."

* Rev. Mr. Barnes.